

# Spark Gap MARC

December 1999

## PSK31

It's the latest digital technology sweeping the Country in Amateur Radio circles.

PSK31 is the hottest thing since Packet Radio muscled its way into the HF and VHF airways. Saturday Dec. 18th. PSK31 will be demonstrated at the club meeting.

So what's so special about this new mode? Primarily if you have a radio and a computer you can work another station keyboard to keyboard with a minimum of power. It's proving the HF frequency mode of choice around the world. The software is free via the internet and it's decoded using your standard computer sound board. You can get a jump on this month's topic by accessing the PSK31 web page at <http://aintel.eri.es/psk31.html> PSK31 is a new digital mode.:

Based on the RTTY mode of operation.

useful for live keyboard to keyboard QSO

that works at 31.25 bauds.

That gave very good copy under low Eb/No numbers and is thus suitable for QRP.

That instead of using FSK or on/off key it uses BPSK or QFSK with a viterbi decoder.

That is available for free for many platforms, including Windows with Soundblaster type soundcard and uses DSP and narrow band (31HZ!!) technology.

W8ISH

## FIELD DAY 1999

Field Day has come and gone. The results have been published in the Dec. 1999 issue of QST. Our effort placed us 272nd. in a field of 336 with a score of 1,440 points. Approximately 1/4 Th.. from the bottom or 3/4th. from the top whichever sounds best to you. Considering that we entered with little or no intention of winning, this was a fair effort.

See you next June Al WA9ZET

December 1999

# The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

## Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, In. Membership is open to all Amateur Radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted the 3rd. Sat. of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, In.

Membership dies are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operators License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

## Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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## COMING BACK STRONG

As you probably know already, Vern N9QBO our Treasurer and Net Control Operator recently underwent a serious surgical procedure. He had a quadruple heart bypass. He is doing very well, in fact he was released on Tuesday Dec. 7th. he is now able to drive again. Vern will probably be back as Net Controller soon. I talked with him yesterday and he indicated he would try doing the net this weekend. If he does he will be back before our next meeting. Our thoughts and prayers have been with you Vern, we all missed you.

WA9ZET for MARC

## Kit building is back?

Kit building has been mostly dead for quite some time, it may be coming back, if a book published by MFJ Publishing is successful. Called "The Giant Book of Electronic Projects". This book is an 8.5" by 5.5" paperback of 340 pages, which includes schematics, board layout, theory, alignment procedures and tips on how to accomplish some of the more intricate functions of building these kits. It covers the Vectronics line of kits. Today locating and purchasing required parts is a major problem to builders. After WW II surplus military equipment was readily available, that source has dried up. Kits provide the means to build a project without spending months locating and purchasing parts. "Could this be the answer"?

Taken in part from Dec. 1999 QST

## Sayings

Hundreds of years ago, homes had thatched roofs—thick straw piled high on straw beneath. These roofs were the only place little animals could get warm. So the pets cats and dogs and other small animals all lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery, so sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof, hence the saying. **It's raining cats and dogs.**

Hundreds of years ago people took their yearly bath in May. They would fill a big tub with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of bathing first in the nice clean water. Then all the sons bathed, and then finally the women and children. The babies were bathed last, hence the saying. "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Most homes had dirt floors. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, thus the saying. "**dirt poor**". The wealthy had slate floors. In the winter, these floors would get slippery when they got wet, so they would spread thresh on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they would keep adding it and adding it until it started slipping outside when one opened the door. so, they put a piece of wood at the entry—a **Threshold**.

Bread was divided according to status. The workers would get the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family the middle and the guest the top, or the **upper crust**. Taken from Fax Daily.

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Wittfield St. is the first street east of Post Roan on  
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(RED MAILBOX)

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Dennis McKendree  
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Al Soltis  
WA9ZET

Matthew Payne

**Club Meeting**  
**Saturday December 18th.**  
**8:00 AM at the EOC**  
**Visit our Web Page at**  
**[www.midstatehans.org](http://www.midstatehans.org)**

## PRB-1

### FCC denies League's request to strengthen PRB-1

The FCC has turned down a 1996 ARRL petition asking the Commission to go further in compelling state and local governments to reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio and apply the least restrictive means to regulate Amateur antennas and activity. However in denying the petition, designated RM8763 the FCC did offer some words that may be helpful to Amateurs.

Specifically the League called upon the FCC to amend section 97.15 (e) of it's rules to say that any state or local antenna restrictions limiting Ham radio antennas heights below 70 ft. would be presumed unreasonable", unless the state or local authority could show it's restrictions were necessary for health, safety or aesthetic reasons.

Further, the ARRL asked the FCC to clarify that local governments role in applying PRB-1 was to accommodate Ham antennas rather than to balance local interests against Federal interests" in effective public service Amateur communications". The League also wanted the FCC to acknowledge that it has no less interest in the effective performance of an Amateur radio station. In an area regulated by deed restrictions, covenants or condo. regulation than by zoning ordinances. It also asked the FCC to preempt overly burdensome conditions and excessive costs localities might require in connection with Amateur antenna installations.

In it's denial, in an order released November 19th. the FCC said it would not be " prudent" or "appropriate" to to set a height standard for Amateur antennas and support structures because of varying ying circumstances that may occur" for different antennas configurations. The Commission also said it did not want to mandate specific provisions that localities must include in local ordinances.

The FCC also said it's policy with respect to restrictive covenants already is clearly stated in PRB-1, which excludes restrictive covenants in private contracts as "outside the reach of our limited preemption" The FCC did say that it "strongly encourages associations of homeowners and private contracting parties to follow the principle of responsible accommodation "with respect to Amateur radio, but it drew the line at proposing special rule changes to bring private restrictive covenants under the umbrella of PRB-1.

The ARRL Executive Committee will revue the order at it's December 4th. meeting to determine what further action is appropriate.

From ARRL letter

## **WA9RDF**

The WA9RDF call sign request is finally filed. It is however unlikely we will be granted the call sign in the near future. If the statement made in Dec. 1999 QST on vanity call signs is on target. Vanity call signs is what our request falls under. This is the FCC statement, in part, as it appeared in Dec. 1999 QST.

As Halloween approached, vanity call sign processing under the new Universal Licensing System still was far from routine, and the number of applications appeared down. Processing vanity applications submitted through August 4. The FCC granted about 90 vanity call signs during early October. But issuance of new vanity call grants was halted October 7, leaving a sizable backlog in the queue. The FCC's Task Force spokesperson said it did not plan to resume issuing vanity call signs until the wrinkles were worked out of the system.

We don't want to go any further until we are comfortable with how the system is processing vanity, a Task Force spokesperson said. The FCC had hoped to have routine vanity processing in place by October 1.

The number of applications filed since the FCC deployed the ULS for Amateur Radio seems to have dropped sharply. In the pre ULS era, it was not uncommon for the FCC to process more than 1000 vanity applications a month--most of them filed using the old electronic application the Internet. Since the ULS went into service for Amateur Service in August it appears that only half that many vanity applications have been filed. The difficulty of filing an application for a vanity call sign or for any other purpose under the ULS has been a source of frustration within the Amateur community.

From December 1999 QST

## **Enforcement**

**FCC sets sights on beefed up 10-meter enforcement:** FCC legal Advisor for enforcement Riley Hollingsworth says Hams can expect more rigorous enforcement on 10-meter issues next year. Over the Labor Day weekend. Hollingsworth told visitors to the Shelby Hamfest in North Carolina that the next area of enforcement would be the encroachment of unlicensed individuals into the 10-meter band and a crackdown on illegal RF amplifiers. His announcement drew loud applause. Hollingsworth repeated his pledge during two subsequent West Coast convention appearances.

From December 1999 QST